

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all previous versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) Method for the production of $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grains, comprising the steps of: ~~characterized by the fact that~~
mixing an aluminum-oxide containing sol is mixed with sinter additives and SiC nanoparticles to obtain a mixture; and
subsequently gelling, drying, calcinating and sintering the mixture, ~~ed~~ the sintering being conducted by heating the mixture in the range between 1300°C and 1600°C .
2. (currently amended) Method according to Claim 1, wherein ~~characterized by the fact that~~ the aluminum-oxide containing sol contains as a solid component superfinely dispersed aluminum oxide monohydrate of the Boehmite type, aluminum alkoxides, aluminum halogenides and/or aluminum nitrate.
3. (currently amended) Method according to either Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the ~~characterized by the fact that that the addition of the SiC nanoparticles are mixed is done~~ in an amount of between 0.1 and < 5 mol %, preferably in the range of 0.3 and 2.5 mol % relative to the aluminum contents of the mixture, calculated as Al_2O_3 .
4. (previously presented) Method according to either of Claims 1 or 2, wherein that prior to the gelling, sintering additives in the form of crystallization seeds, crystal growth inhibitors and/or other modifying components that influence the sintering process are added.
5. (currently amended) Method according to Claim 4, wherein ~~characterized by the fact that~~ fine-particled α aluminum oxide is used as crystallization seed.

6. (currently amended) Method according to either of Claims 1 or 2, wherein the gelling of the suspensions occurs by increasing or decreasing the pH value, through aging, the addition of electrolytes, increased temperature, and/or concentrating the solution.
7. (currently amended) Method according to either of Claims 1 or 2, wherein the drying of the gel is carried out in a temperature range between 50 °C and 120 °C, with subsequent calcination between 500 °C and 800 °C, and sintering in a temperature range between 1300 °C and 1600 °C.
8. (currently amended) Method according to Claim 7, wherein the ~~characterized by the fact that~~ sintering is done in a temperature range between 1380 °C and 1500 °C.
9. (currently amended) Method according to Claim 7, wherein the ~~characterized by the fact that~~ sintering is carried out under inert conditions.
10. (previously presented) Method according to either of Claims 1 or 2, wherein comminution to the desired grain size is done before or after sintering.
11. (currently amended) Al₂O₃/SiC nanocomposite abrasive grain with a hardness of > 16 GPa, a density of > 95% of the theory, and an SiC portion of between 0.1 and < 5 mol %, relative to the Al₂O₃ matrix, wherein ~~characterized by the fact that~~ the SiC particles are present in the Al₂O₃ matrix as well as intragranularly and the abrasive grain shows a performance factor LF₂₅ > 75 % in the single-grain scratch test.
12. (currently amended) Al₂O₃/SiC nanocomposite abrasive grain according to Claim 11, wherein ~~characterized by the fact that~~ the SiC portion preferably amounts to between 0.3 and < 2.5 mol %, relative to the Al₂O₃ matrix.

13. (previously presented) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to either of Claims 11 or 12, wherein the SiC particles are predominantly present intragranularly in the Al_2O_3 matrix.
14. (previously presented) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to either of Claims 11 or 12, wherein the Al_2O_3 crystals of the matrix show mean diameters of between $0.2\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ and $20\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.
15. (previously presented) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to either of Claims 11 or 12, wherein the Al_2O_3 matrix has a submicron structure and a mean particle size of $< 1\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, preferably $< 0.5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.
16. (currently amended) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to Claim 15, wherein characterized by the fact that coarse Al_2O_3 crystals are formed in the submicron Al_2O_3 matrix.
17. (currently amended) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to Claim 16, wherein characterized by the fact that the coarse Al_2O_3 crystals have a mean diameter of $> 2\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, preferably $> 5\text{ }\mu\text{m}$.
18. (currently amended) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according one of Claims 16 or 17, wherein characterized by the fact that the coarse Al_2O_3 crystals have an oblong shape.
19. (previously presented) $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grain according to either of Claims 16 through 18, wherein the coarse Al_2O_3 crystals have a length/width ratio of between 2:1 and 10:1, preferably between 4:1 and 6:1.
20. (currently amended) Grinding belts or grinding disks, comprising Utilization of $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{SiC}$ nanocomposite abrasive grains according to Claim 11 in combination with

backing substrates or materials ~~to comprise grinding belts or grinding disks.~~